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French Print Media and the Portrayal of Refugees: The Biopolitics of Crime Reporting

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Abstract

Across the world, the media plays an essential role in the formation of public opinion surrounding the plight of asylum seekers who are fleeing persecution and conflict. There are two global frames through which the public is conditioned to view refugees, either as dangers to society or as helpless victims. One potential explanation, as is addressed by this research, is the print media's portrayal of refugees and asylum seekers. Through the synthesis of media priming, in which print news influences associations between concepts and memory by constant presentation of two concepts, increasing the accessibility of an association, and the biopolitics of the humanitarian aid system, often examined in relation to nutrition and health, the question this research poses is: how did the French print media portray refugees and asylum seekers during the peak of the refugee crisis in Europe, from 2015 to 2017, in relation to their interactions with bodies? To answer this question, roughly three hundred French news articles were coded based on four criteria. The resulting data reveals that the French print media reported on crimes of bodily harm more so than those of non-bodily harm. Additionally, alleged crimes committed by refugees peaked during periods of heightened fear surrounding refugees across Europe. Finally, and possibly most shockingly, reports of hate crimes committed against refugees peaked during or after the same periods of fear prompted by terrorist attacks.

Introduction

The European refugee crisis officially began on April 23, 2015, when the European Council conducted an emergency conference to address an alarming rise in drownings of migrants in the Mediterranean in early 2015. With the signing of the Dublin Regulation in 1990, followed with its enforcement in 1997 and second and third adoptions in 2003 and 2013, respectively, the 2015 meeting set the standards of asylum seeking in the European Union. Its twenty-eight member states agreed to take in refugees under a quota scheme and to increase funding of naval search and rescue operations along the Central Mediterranean and Western Balkans Routes. Such a quota scheme was highly contested, as the 2008 rendition of the Dublin Regulation was written with the goal of preventing asylum seekers from submitting applications to multiple states and become “orbiting” refugees shuffling between member states. Northern European Union states supported the Dublin Regulation III strongly, as it placed the onus of the migration crisis on poorer southern states.

However, in August on 2015, German Chancellor Angela Merkel gave her “Wir schaffen das” (we can do this/we can handle this) speech, announcing that refugees would be accepted in Germany upon arrival, which consequently flooded the nation with people seeking sanctuary (Betts and Collier, 2017). This new policy technically violated the Dublin III Regulation, however, Merkel argued that it was justified by the “sovereignty clause” that allows for deviation from EU policy if national interest is at stake. This presented multiple issues. First of all, Germany only guaranteed a bus ride from Hungary, and with refugees coming from across the Mediterranean, this sent to message of, “Wir schaffen das... provided you can swim” (Betts and Collier, 2017). Furthermore, both potential and current refugees across the world realized that this sort of policy would not last forever and all made a dash for Germany at once (Betts and

Collier, 2017). Suddenly, Germany and its neighbouring states, such as Austria and Hungary, were faced with an influx.

This issue has its roots in the “Never again!” mentality of the German public and a political move by Vladimir Putin. The German national conscience post- 1945 and 1989 is very attentive to the issue of refugees. During the war, the Nazi regime had created refugees across Europe; in 1989 the fall of the Berlin Wall triggered a flood of migrants from East to West Germany, thereby compelling to accept refugees in 2015 (Betts and Collier, 2017). This acceptance didn’t become an issue until other states would not follow suit, and Putin saw a chance to humiliate Merkel. In September of 2015, Russia intervened in the Syrian Civil War in support of the Assad regime and subsequently created a new wave of refugees. With an increase in violence against civilians, Assad then used forced immigration as a tactical tool (Betts and Collier, 2017). By indirectly sending a flood of Syrians to Germany, Putin could assure Merkel’s power would wane and her voice on the economic sanctions against Russia would be smaller.

This political move had serious repercussion for Germany’s neighbour, France. When it became clear to asylum seekers that opportunities in a saturated Germany were slim, many began to migrate through Belgium in an attempt to move their lives to the United Kingdom, which, though it has strict borders, had taken on a small number in comparison to other European Union states due to its geographical location. A major stop along this route was the Calais Jungle, a refugee encampment located near Calais, France. It was an ideal location for asylum seekers to reach the Port of Calais and the Channel Tunnel, however, as the camp grew, the French government began to carry out evictions and resettlements.

There are many drawbacks to the camp system, most notably that camps keep refugees isolated. In the Nyarugusu camp in Tanzania, *marougé*, or red dust, is a literal marker of who is and who is not a refugee (Thomson, 2014). Within the camp, people can also base how long someone has been there on the red tint of their skin. As the Mary Douglas saying goes, “dirtiness is matter out of place” (Douglas, 1966). Refugees are coloured and dirtied by the *marougé* and are therefore seen as alien. The inhabitants of the Nyarugusu camp are constantly trying to transcend this dirtiness, with mothers telling their children not to play with researchers or aid workers until they had cleaned the dust off (Thomson, 2014). The *marougé* has become a dividing factor between the refugee and the ethnographer, those who are isolated and those who aren’t. This is true of all camps, regardless of whether dirt is referred to as *marougé* or *boue* or *Dreck*. In the camps in France, such as Calais, *boue* divides refugees from citizens as can be seen in the film *Qu’ils reposent en révolte*, directed by Sylvain George. The dirt and grime of the camp show how, by extension, refugees who are trapped there are also matter out of place and therefore, isolated.

Another issue with the camp is that it is an outdated, short-term solution. Within the current system, refugees are caught in a prolonged limbo and risk becoming permanent refugees. 54% of the world’s refugees are in a protracted situation, meaning that they have been in exile for over five years and are denied the right to work or the freedom to move (Betts and Collier, 2017). This poses a problem not only to the refugees affected, but to host governments. Without options, an entire generation of refugees can be born into, grow up in, and become adults in camps, which creates a security issue (Betts and Collier, 2017). Camps are ideal places for politicization and radicalization. This is especially true for youth, who, because they’ve grown up in traumatic situations, are mature enough to join political movements and understand their

implications (Hart, 2008). The aid provided to refugees isn't conducive to prospering economically or socially, while the system in which they live pushes them to mobilization.

The European media has picked up on refugee and asylum seeker stories by using the shock factor of camps and the dangerous or vulnerable nature of refugees highlighted above and as such, refugees are extremely susceptible to harsh stereotyping in the media that takes away their agency. In order to best reap the benefits of the flawed humanitarian system, some refugees occasionally conform to these stereotypes. However, others reject them based on their personal identity. Though there are countless refugee stereotypes, three most popular ones, as found by the research of Masquelier and Maalki, are (i) the idea of refugees as a huddled mass, (ii) the assumption that young refugees have to be coerced to join political movements, (iii) that refugees have to look like they deserve aid.

Refugees are commonly thought of as a huddled mass. This is because the specific history, culture, and politics of a refugee is eroded by the bureaucracy of humanitarianism. As Malkki states, "Refugees stop being specific persons and become pure victims in general: universal man, universal woman, universal child, and, taken together, universal family" (Malkki, 1996). Aid, while necessary, carries with it the baggage of "dehistoricizing" social practices that create this image of a "universal refugee." This can include the language used when reporting on refugees, which, though intentions might be to shed light on the crisis, can be supercilious (Malkki, 1996). Furthermore, pictures used in the media give the public a sense of what constitutes "refugeeness." This means that the agency rests in the hands of the photographer, not in the subject of the photograph (Malkki, 1996). Because of this, refugees are seen as a universal victim rather than various political and historical actors with their own narratives. Refugees are

often taught to play this role when giving interviews (Dunn, 2017), and as will be discussed later, doing so can be beneficial for refugees in the type of aid they receive.

There is an assumption that young refugees have to be coerced into being involved in political and military movements, because the camps in which they are recruited are seen as locations of vulnerability. This is heightened by the stereotypes of refugees that are highlighted above, because it is assumed that refugees are helpless, which strips them of their agency and therefore they are not susceptible to radicalization because radicalization requires agency. This is simply not true. As was stated in Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, children have the right to “express... views freely in all matters affecting them” (Hart, 2008). This right of expression means that children have the agency to participate in mobilization. Furthermore, young people are competent enough to become radicalized and realize the implications of the movements they join. Most youths who partake in politicization are teens and these teens’ maturity levels have been accelerated by the trauma they’ve lived through (Hart, 2008). Older generations even pressure young people to become mobilized through the emphasis they place on returning to their homeland (Hart, 2008). This all goes to show that this stereotype is completely unfounded.

Finally, it is believed that refugees have to look like they deserve aid (Zetter, 1991). For example, refugees in Cyprus were given housing based on two criteria: the size of their family and their socioeconomic level (Zetter, 1991). Early on, many refugee families found it to be advantageous to be labelled as poor in order to get a house and job and therefore conformed to the “needy” stereotype. However, over time, these refugees found the aid provided to be inadequate. The neighbourhood of refugee houses quickly became a ghetto of a uniform demographic, the houses were poorly equipped for multi-generational families, and it was

difficult to move out of the neighbourhood into the general population. Because of this, later refugees began to reject the stereotype to access better opportunities. There was a further study conducted by Stein and de Voe about how Western humanitarian agencies made Tibetan refugees into clients (Zetter, 1991). It showed how the introduction of an institution destabilizes the already existing identities of refugees, in that they either accept or reject a label in order to receive the best possible opportunities. This can be disastrous for communities because competition is created, much like in the Cyprus housing situation. While refugees aren't needy, they sometimes act so in order to get the best out of the system.

The media have overwhelmingly reported on refugees through these stereotypes, so it is important to identify them for analysis of the findings of the Case Study. What might still be unclear, however, is the choice of France as the region for this study rather than a clearer actor in the refugee crisis, such as Germany. Like Germany, France has a disproportionate voice in European Union policy. However, unlike Germany, France has accepted a relatively small number of refugees. For this reason, it could be argued that any trends in French media portrayal of refugees would be exacerbated in German media.

Review of Literature

The goal of this review of prior research is to identify current knowledge that may be important and appropriate for identifying the ways in which French print media affects the French population's relationship with the displaced. This review of literature broadly addresses the concepts of biopolitics and the refugee, the role of media in governance, and press coverage of the refugee crisis in the EU.

BIOPOLITICS AND THE REFUGEE

First of all, the works of Michel Foucault, Mariella Pandolfi, Hannah Arendt, and Giorgio Agamben will introduce and cover foundational understanding of biopolitics. Hannah Arendt's "The Origins of Totalitarianism" is the cornerstone of refugee studies research upon which most theories of biopolitics are built. Arendt makes the argument that if states must be relied upon to uphold rights, then the stateless have none. Arendt's argument can be summarised by three main points; (i) the origins of the Rights of Man prove that there was an oversight in whose responsibility it is to uphold these supposedly inherent rights, as it was assumed that all people belonged to a polity, a notion which is misaligned with reality, (ii) as soon as people become denationalized, human rights are impossible to enforce, and (iii) without protected rights, displaced people risk being stripped of their humanity and becoming sub-human (Arendt, 1973).

Giorgio Agamben then expanded on the last point in her argument by distinguishing between two forms of life: *zoe* and *bios*. The *bios* of a human is the "qualified form of life," or the political part of a human that belongs to a polity, while *zoe* is the natural, animalistic, reproductive part of a human that maintains biological life (Agamben, 1998). Combined with Arendt's argument, reducing a person to their *zoe*, which occurs after denationalization, the

displaced are viewed as savages and deprived of collective human responsibilities, because the only tie of savages to society and humanity is their membership to the human species.

It is essential to identify at what point humans are stripped of their humanity, as outlined by Arendt, as well as Agamben's distinction between *zoe* and *bios* to understand the application of biopolitics to the refugee population. Foucault developed a definition of biopolitics as the governance of humans in and through their bodies (Miller, 2010). This definition is derived from the notion of biopower as described by Agamben, which is the extension of state power over the physical and political bodies of a populace (Agamben, 1998). In her article, "Contract of Mutual (In)Difference: Governance and the Humanitarian Apparatus in Contemporary Albania and Kosovo," Pandolfi further expanded this definition by describing biopolitics as the ability to "let die or make live," meaning that the governance of people through their bodies is not equal in all populations. Some get preferential treatment based on their membership to a certain polity, therefore some lives are deemed more important than others (Pandolfi, 2003).

There are two main focuses in current research done on the relationship between biopolitics and the refugee, which will be highlighted with the works of Miriam Ticktin, Erin Koch, and Elizabeth Dunn.

Miriam Ticktin's "Where Ethics and Politics Meet" examines the consequences of humanitarianism as politics through the focus of the *sans-papiers* (refugees without documents) in France. The illness clause of French law allows displaced people with serious diseases the right to stay in France to receive treatment, which led to a wave of asylum seekers to purposely inject themselves with HIV (Ticktin, 2006). This was paralleled by Koch's research, which found that prisoners would purposely contract TB to be housed in a more comfortable prison block (Koch, 2006). These ethnographies show the paradox of humanitarianism in politics: the

moment they are reduced to their bare life *zoe*, when they are being judged as deserving of aid based on their biology, is the exact moment they must decide whether or not they want to prioritize their *bios*. Dunn found a similar paradox in her research on Georgian internally displaced people (IDPs) in South Ossetia. However, Dunn applied the concept differently; instead of addressing obvious, clear-cut governance of who is and is not allowed to stay within borders, she found that biopolitics could be applied as soft power in controlling the culture of food and sharing practices (Dunn, 2017). In her book, this soft power application of biopolitics is exemplified by macaroni, the sole food provided by humanitarian agencies as it fulfilled caloric requirements. However, Georgians regard macaroni as food of the poor, so it was rude to invite others over for meals. In this way, the agencies were able to govern, though inadvertently, the movement of IDPs in and out of each other's houses by the food they provided.

MEDIA AND GOVERNANCE

Generally, studies concerning media as a mechanism of governance are far removed from those of biopolitics. This review of literature will explore research done on media framing and priming and additionally the responsibility of the media in the framing of displaced people. Maxwell McCombs and Florian Arendt have explored the concept of media being used to form public opinion, while Arendt and Seta Hadesian explored agenda setting in the context of refugee studies.

McCombs' "The Evolution of Agenda-Setting Research: Twenty-Five Years in the Marketplace of Ideas," explains that there are many ways the news can paint a particular truth with the intent of influencing people's attitudes, but three of the most common are: (i) documenting the scope of a social problem, (ii) critiquing alternative solutions for dealing with a social problem, and (iii) focusing on the tactical efforts of either government officials or activists

in dealing with a social problem (McCombs, 1993). Arendt's "Dose-dependent media priming effects of stereotypic newspaper articles on implicit and explicit stereotypes" expands on these three methods by applying them to media priming, the process in which the media sets evaluative criteria people use to judge people and concepts through the amount of coverage and lack thereof it gives to a specific topic. Arendt argues that media priming acts as an external stimulus that influences associations between concepts and memory (Arendt, 2013). For example, the constant presentation of a political candidate's name and "bogus" in election reporting strengthens the neural link between the two concepts and increases the accessibility of such an association.

Hadeshian had similar findings to Arendt when it comes to framing refugees in the media but disagrees about where the onus should fall. She argues that proper media portrayal is crucial in the coexistence of the displaced because, on average, less than 20% of populations has face to face experience with a refugee or asylum seeker. While Arendt maintains that audiences must be informed and conscious of such tactics (Arendt, 2013), Hadeshian disputes that by saying that the media has responsibility in providing truthful coverage that does not perpetuate stereotypes and to uphold such a responsibility, humanitarian agencies and aid states must support refugee advocates for media relations (Hadeshian, 2006).

PRESS COVERAGE OF THE REFUGEE CRISIS IN THE EU AND THE FIGURE OF THE REFUGEE

Most studies pertaining to press coverage of the refugee crisis are comparative and make generalizations of trends in reporting. This literature review will cover the different findings of Dina Matar, Myria Georgiou and Rafal Zaborowski, and Mike Berry and Kerry Moore.

Dina Matar's "Media Coverage of the Migration Crisis in Europe: A Confused and Polarized Narrative," covers the frames through which the European media tended to report on

refugees from 2015 to 2017. It concludes that stereotypes were repeated across the continent that “othered” refugees from the collective European “us,” as well as frames that portrayed refugees as a security problem (Matar, 2017). It was through this lens of security that began to form the negative migrant stereotype of a burden on host societies. This was echoed by Georgiou and Zaborowski’s research. One of the key trends they found was temporal. While the response of European press in the summer and fall of 2015 was generally sympathetic, it gradually turned into suspicion and hostility (Georgiou and Zaborowski, 2018). Additionally, Berry and Moore found that despite there being a single clear frame that changed over time, as Matar, Georgiou, and Zaborowski argued, themes of coverage varied greatly but refugees were discussed as a threat to national security and/or cultural threat more often in the southern countries, such as Italy, Spain, and Greece, than the northern countries, like the UK, Germany, and Sweden (Berry and Moore, 2018).

Additionally, refugees tend to be viewed through two main lenses, the needy, helpless victim, or the dangerous criminal, as discussed with the works of Jason Hart, Adeline Masquillier, and Roger Zetter.

Zetter’s foundational work on the figure of the refugee, “Labeling Refugees: Forming and Transforming a Bureaucratic Identity,” was the first to explore the refugee as a helpless victim. Through his ethnographic work in Cyprus, he found that the labeling of refugees as helpless was ironically non-participatory and heightened the helplessness of the displaced through the very process of labeling. However, such a labelling assigned bureaucratic need and assured assistance (Zetter, 1991). In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, Masquillier expanded on Zetter’s research by investigating the hesitance of labelling victims of the natural disaster as refugees. Interestingly, she found that while being labelled as a refugee increased the aid that

was provided, victims thought that it stripped them of their culture and place in America (Masquelier, 2006). The label made them more culturally vulnerable than they physically were, another example of displaced people prioritizing their *bios* above their *zoe* in a situation in which they are forced to choose (Agamben, 1998). Hart, however, disputed the claims of Zetter and Masquelier. In their article, “Displaced children’s participation in political violence,” they argued that the most consistent frame through which refugees are viewed is as a violent danger to society, particularly in states with populist political movements or parties. Yet they did find a paradox of framing: viewing refugee children as helpless victims opens up a security threat since the refugee camp is a place of intense political mobilization in which victims can become dangerous (Hart, 2008). Together, these frames provide a context through which a French audience interacts with news stories on refugees.

Source Overview

Nexis Uni, accessed through IU Library, was the database used to find French news articles about refugee crime. The database consists of numerous popular French newspapers, including *Agence France Presse*, *L'Orient*, *La Presse Française*, *Le Figaro*, *Le Monde*, and *RFI*, as well as smaller regional newspapers and periodicals. There are a few important things to note about Nexis Uni before continuing. First of all, it is missing some widely circulated newspapers, such as the bi-monthly *Libération*, however, as stated, it includes many regional papers. In fact, it is one of the only databases that collects regional papers equally in Northern, Central, and Southern France. Secondly, unlike some similar databases, Nexis Uni allows to search by omitted words and phrases, which allows for the omission of cases of crimes against humanity and war crimes that were widely and simultaneously reported on in France during the peak of the refugee crisis.

Print news articles were searched for under the keywords “refugié” and “crime,” with the omission of “crime(s) contre l’humanité” (crime(s) against humanity) and “crime(s) de guerre” (war crime(s)), as will be explained in the Methods section of the Case Study. The results were also restricted to strictly French-language print news articles published in metropolitan France. The Guided Advanced Search function allowed for these terms and exclusions and generated a possible list of 3,210 possible articles between January 1, 2015 and December 31, 2017 from which a corpus was built. Roughly three hundred news articles were chosen, around one hundred per year, based on relevancy decided upon by a single coder. The news articles were then coded based on four metrics, as will be explained in the Case Study.

The results of this study were then interpreted through the lens of biopolitics, by first looking at if and how biopolitics extend to the media by comparing research on biopolitics and

the refugee, as highlighted above in the Review of Literature, to the ways the French media reported on refugee crime and the effects of such reporting on the bodies of refugees. The goal of this was to synthesize humanitarian studies with media studies by looking at the trends of the French media reporting in and through the bodies of refugees over the course of the refugee crisis in Europe, by comparing spikes in bodily crime reporting with the timeline of the crisis.

Case Study

As noted above in the review of literature, the two frames through which the public tends to view refugees are either as helpless victims or as dangers to society. But why? One potential answer, though necessarily partial, is the portrayal of refugees and asylum seekers in print media. Arendt found that through media priming, news could influence associations between concepts and memory by constant presentation of two concepts, which would increase the likelihood of an association. Additionally, as has been shown through the works of Ticktin, Koch, and Dunn, displaced people are constantly subject to biopolitics in relation to their health and nutrition. This case study seeks to synthesize these two areas of research to answer one main question: how did the French print media portray refugees and asylum seekers during the peak of the refugee crisis in Europe, from 2015 to 2017, in relation to their interactions with bodies?

METHOD

Nexis Uni was used to find French newspaper articles between January 1, 2015 and December 31, 2017 that included the keywords “réfugié” (refugee) and “crime.” After a search that resulted in over 10,000 hits, the results were narrowed by excluding the terms “crime(s) de guerre” (war crime(s)) and “crime(s) contre l’humanité” (crime(s) against humanity), because there were a significant number of articles reporting on war crime cases in Rwanda. After this exclusion, the list went down to 3,210 possible articles. From this list, articles were chosen based on their relevance; the article had to discuss either a crime committed by a refugee or a crime committed against a refugee. It is important to note that some newspapers on both sides of the political spectrum were not included in the study because they were considered to be extremist and not representative of mainstream French readership. Roughly one hundred articles

were chosen per year of the study. The following table lists the newspapers included in this study and the number of articles posted in the time frame.

Table 1: French Newspapers Used in Study and Their Corresponding Number of Articles Posted on Refugee Crime

| Newspaper | Number of Articles |
|---------------------------|--------------------|
| Agence France Presse | 42 |
| Courrier International | 6 |
| EuroNews | 3 |
| France 24 | 6 |
| Global Voices | 6 |
| L'Orient | 18 |
| L'Est Républicain | 3 |
| L'Eveil de la Haute Loire | 3 |
| L'Express | 6 |
| L'Humanité | 9 |
| L'Obs | 6 |
| La Croix | 3 |
| La Presse Française | 27 |
| La Tribune | 3 |
| Le Figaro | 36 |
| Le Matin | 9 |
| Le Monde | 30 |
| Le Parisien | 12 |
| Le Potentiel | 6 |
| Le Temps | 6 |
| Locale | 3 |
| Marianne | 9 |
| Midi Libre | 9 |
| Ouest-France | 6 |
| Paris-Normandie | 3 |
| RFI | 12 |
| Rue89 | 3 |
| SDA | 9 |
| Sud Ouest | 3 |

Articles were then coded based on four metrics. The first category, by/against, referred to whether the crime by committed by a refugee or against a refugee. The second category, allegedly/proven, questioned whether the crime had only been allegedly committed by a refugee

or if it had been proven to have been committed by the refugee, as reported by the police. The third category, bodily harm, examined if the crime involved bodily harm while the final category, type of harm, referred to what kind of harm had been committed, bodily or not. The coding was completed by one researcher. The first three categories were binary whereas the last category, type of harm, could only be assigned one form of harm.

RESULTS

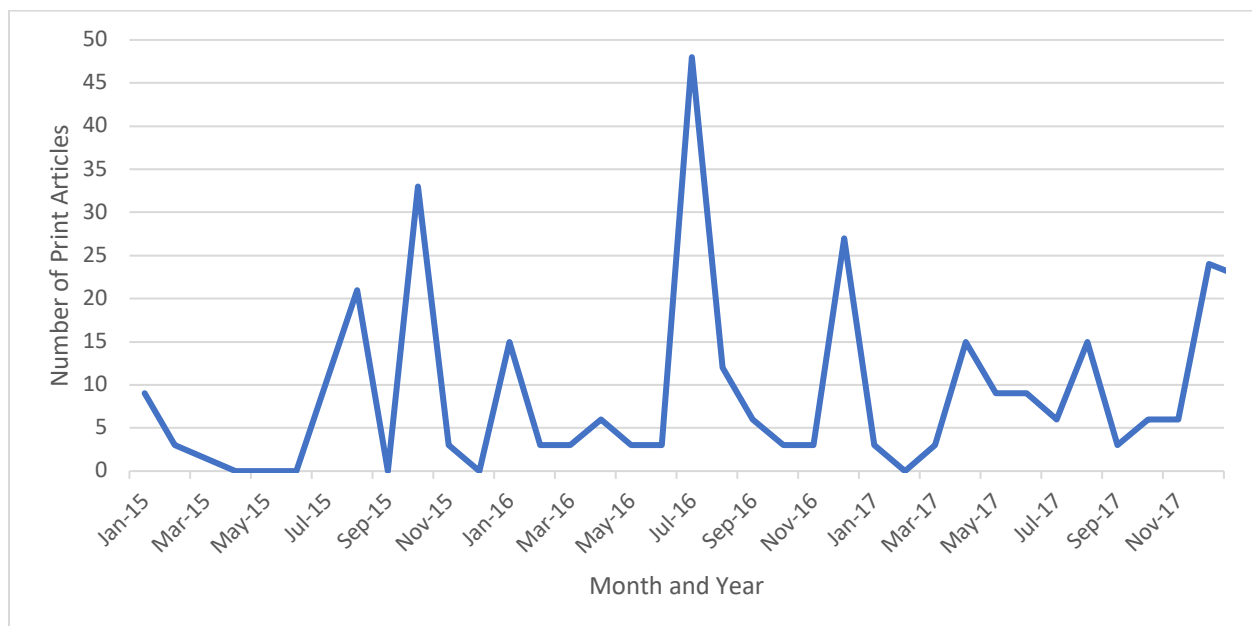
The analysis of the coded news articles had five major findings. First of all, refugee crime reporting peaked with four specific incidents of terrorism across Europe. Additionally, at these points of heightened fear, there was a spike in the number of articles about crimes unrelated to the major attacks that were allegedly committed by refugees and asylum seekers. Thirdly, following these major events, there was an increase in reports of hate crimes committed against refugees, immigrants, and asylum seekers, both physical and verbal. Finally, refugee crime press coverage favored reporting on crimes of bodily harm rather than those reporting on non-bodily harm by a large margin. It also showed that newspapers reported on a variety of crimes committed by or allegedly committed by refugees, but for both categories, murder was the most frequent crime.

There was steady reporting on refugee crime beginning in June 2015, shortly after the beginning of the refugee crisis in Europe, until December 2016, when it began to drop over the course of 2017 (see Figure 1). There were spikes in crime reporting in October 2015, July 2016, December 2016, and December 2017, all of which correspond to events involving refugees. In October 2015, two Syrian refugee children were kidnapped and murdered in Berlin. The largest spike in refugee crime reporting was in July 2016 after three separate attacks in Germany, as well as a major attack in France, as follows:

- The first attack was on July 14 in Nice, France, in which a Tunisian immigrant ran a truck into a crowd of people.
- The first German attack was the Munich shooting on July 22, in which a son of Iranian asylum seekers killed 10 and injured 36 people.
- Two days later, on July 24, there were two more attacks, the Reutlingen knife attack and the Ansbach bombing. The former involved a Syrian asylum seeker attacking his girlfriend and strangers with a knife, while the latter was a suicide bombing in front of a wine bar by a 27-year-old Syrian refugee.

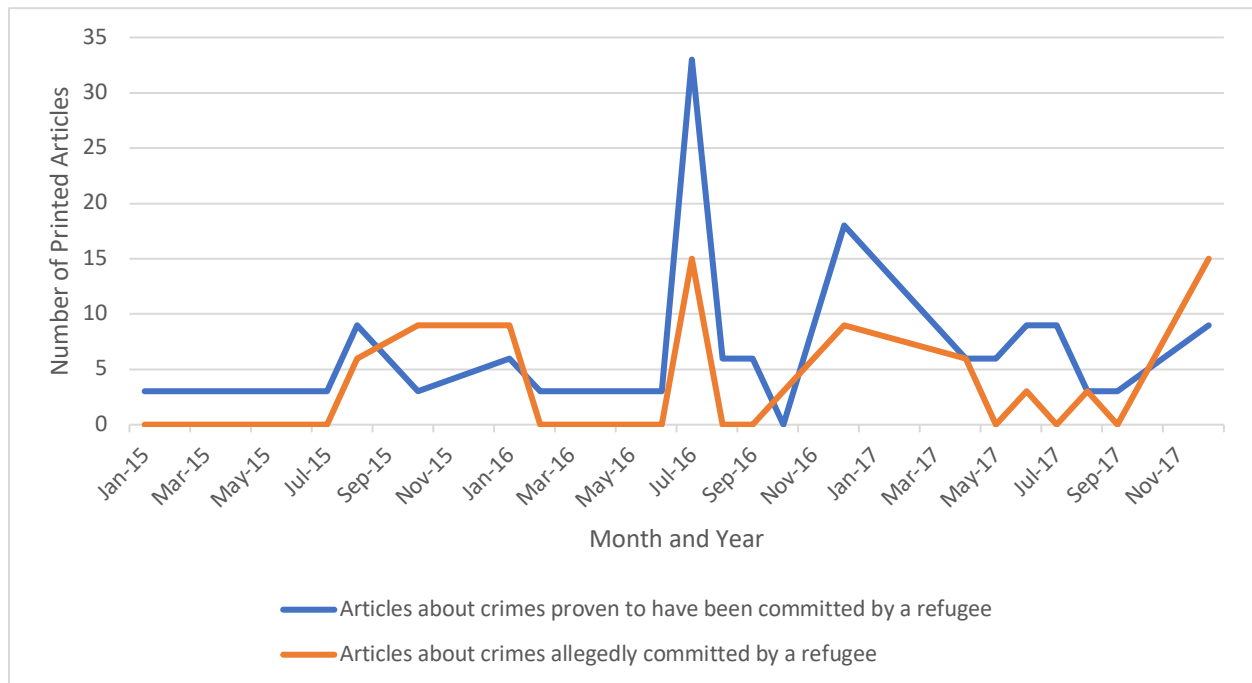
These four events sparked a wave of fear and hostility across Europe. The next major spike was in December of 2016 and focused primarily on the Berlin truck attack of December 19, which was committed by a rejected Tunisian asylum seeker. Finally, a Moroccan migrant was charged in December of 2017 for the murder of a French police officer in Magnanville. The trial was highly publicized in France.

Figure 1: Number of French Print News Articles per Month from 2015 to 2017



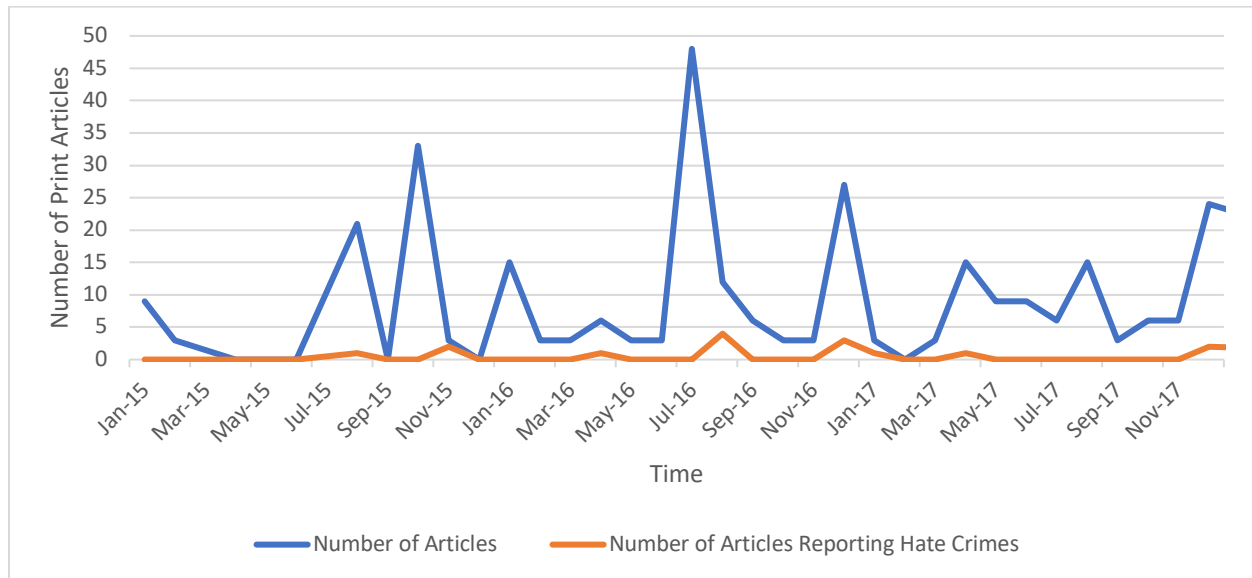
It is important to note that the spikes in reporting following these major attacks included many articles that weren't about the attacks. Rather, some articles involved smaller crimes, mostly murders, allegedly committed by refugees, as well as petty crimes. Figure 2 shows the increase in reporting on alleged crimes committed by refugees, unrelated to the major attacks, that occurred at moments of heightened fear in Europe.

Figure 2: Number of French Print News Articles About Crime Proven to Have Been Committed by a Refugee vs Number of Articles About Crime Allegedly Committed by a Refugee From 2015 to 2017



Interestingly, there were fourteen total articles reporting on hate crimes against refugees from January 1, 2015 to December 31, 2017. Of those fourteen articles, eleven fell either during the month of heightened reporting (usually due to a terrorist attack as is explained above) or in the month following. Figure 3 shows the increase in reports about hate crimes against refugees, both physical and non-physical, during or following spikes in refugee crime reporting.

**Figure 3: Number of Print Articles Per Month vs Number of Articles About Hate Crimes
Against Refugees From 2015 to 2017**



In total, 317 articles were coded of which 59 reported on crime involving non-bodily harm, including hate crime, smuggling, and burglary, while 258 articles reported on crime involving bodily harm, including murder, rape, and terrorism. This means that, of these coded papers, 81 percent reported on refugee crimes involving bodily harm while 19 percent reported on refugee crimes involving non-bodily harm.

The types of bodily crime proven to be committed by a refugee and allegedly committed by a refugee varied slightly. As is shown in Figure 5, murder and terrorism lead both proven and alleged crimes, with assassination and rape following. However, the less-reported upon crimes, which largely constitute reporting unrelated to the major events of October 2015, July 2016, December 2016, and December 2017, tended to be mainly alleged, unproven crimes suspected to have been committed by a refugee.

**Figure 5: Types of Bodily Crime Allegedly Committed by a Refugee as Reported in French
Print News Articles from 2015 to 2017**

**Figure 6: Types of Bodily Crime Proven to Have Been Committed by a Refugee as
Reported in French Print News Articles from 2015 to 2017**

DISCUSSION

The objective of this research was to assess how the French print media portrayed refugees and asylum seekers during the peak of the refugee crisis in Europe, from 2015 to 2017, through the lens of biopolitics. The results of the coded articles revealed that the French news

print media largely reported on crimes of bodily harm more so than those of non-bodily harm and that alleged crimes committed by refugees peaked during periods of heightened fear surrounding refugees across Europe. Additionally, reports of hate crimes committed against refugees peaked during or after the same periods of fear prompted by terrorist attacks. The results have four theoretical implications that will be discussed, including the debate over who should be responsible for combatting media framing.

The first major finding of this study is the argument that biopolitics do seem to extend to the media, in that the media participate in biopolitical subjugation of refugees and asylum seekers. To put it succinctly, the media are dynamic actors in the control of refugees in and through their bodies. While petty crimes were reported on, bodily harm made up over eighty percent of refugee crime reporting from 2015 to 2017. This means that the French press was reporting in and through the bodies of refugees and those they interacted with. This is two-sided. On one side, journalists reported on major crimes in which the refugee was the victim only when hate crimes and murder were at issue. This is exemplified by the number of articles about the kidnapping and murder of the two young asylum seeking girls in Germany, as well as the spikes in hate crime reporting following the major attacks in Europe. Conversely, journalist reported on crimes committed by refugees. As is seen in Figure 5 and Figure 6, the vast majority of these crimes, both alleged and proven to have been committed by refugees, involved bodily harm, especially murder. In this way, the French news media was reporting through the bodies of refugees that were harmed as well as through the bodies of those that were allegedly and truly harmed by refugees, creating a frame through which displaced people could be viewed by the French public.

To further understand this extension of biopolitics to the media, it is important to refer back to Agamben. As addressed in the review of literature, previous research on biopolitics and the refugee has shown that displaced persons must occasionally give up their *bios*, the political part of a human that belongs to a polity, to maintain their *zoe*, the reproductive part of a human that maintains a biological life. With the results of this research, an argument can be made that a refugee's *bios*, the social sphere that they live in, is intensely affected by the reporting on the *zoe* of those a few displaced people interact with. Additionally, Figure 2 shows that the number of reports of petty, individual alleged crime increased dramatically during months of large-scale terrorist attacks committed by immigrants or asylum seekers. Together, the data from Figure 5, Figure 6, and Figure 2 suggests that the French media frames refugees as more dangerous when Europeans are already fearful, supporting Arendt's social cognition model of media priming.

This last point is an essential finding of this case study. As Georgiou and Zaborowski found across Europe, there was a systematic and persistent promotion of hostility and aggression towards immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers by the press throughout 2016 and 2017. However, unlike their research, this case study produced results that suggest such hostility and aggression peaked at critical points of terror in Europe, especially during October 2015, July 2016, December 2016, and December 2017. The priming model suggested by Florian Arendt, in which words such as "murder," "terrorism," "assassination," "rape," and others found in Figure 5 and Figure 6 make up an associative store, leads to higher likelihood of these associations. Over time, chronic media priming can lead to propositional reasoning, and finally explicit stereotyping. While Masquillier and Zetter found that refugees tend to be stereotyped as a helpless victim, which is harmful because it strips them of their agency, this study suggests that refugees and asylum seekers also tend to be stereotyped as dangerous murderers, rapists, and

threats. This has very real effects to the safety and well-being of refugees, as will be seen in the following arguments.

Another interesting point was the spike in hate crimes following the key dates of major attacks. This suggests that the French media wasn't only reporting in and through the bodies of refugees but was playing an important role in what Ticktin called "letting die or making live." By reporting on more alleged crimes during periods of heightened fear in Europe, the French press was fear mongering which led to real events of "letting die" when refugees and asylum seekers were physically attacked for their mere existence and lack of membership in a polity.

This "letting die" supports Hannah Arendt's argument that membership to a state, confirmed by a body's place at the time of birth, is the only way that "essential" human rights can be reliably protected. In all fourteen cases of hate crimes, refugees were targeted because of their stateless nature and the fear that it sparked in the attacker, with about 80 percent following a major terrorist attack committed by an immigrant or refugee. As Figure 2 shows, reporting of alleged crimes that were unrelated to the major attacks increased during these moments of heightened fear, which can be interpreted as media priming as a form of fear mongering. The effects of French crime reporting were genuinely felt in the bodies of refugees, which were attacked due to the priming of refugees, asylum seekers, and immigrants as dangers. Recalling Arendt's argument, the location of refugees' bodies at birth and their subsequent denationalization from their birth state stripped them of the right of fair representation and, to an even more extreme extent, their right to bodily wellness because they belong to no state that will defend their rights. The structure of the Rights of Man and its emphasis on bodily placement at birth and subsequent membership to a polity places displaced people in a vulnerable situation

and the use of the social cognition model of media priming by the French media seems to have exacerbated this with the consequence of real hate crimes.

Furthermore, this study supports the argument of the existence of two main frames through which a refugee is represented in news reporting. Of all three hundred coded articles, not one reported on a refugee, immigrant, or asylum seeker being witness to a crime or speaking for themselves. Instead, the articles either reported on the refugee being a victim, in which they died, or a danger to society, in which they either truly or allegedly attacked a citizen of the European Union. What is interesting here is the increasing lack of sympathy towards refugees and asylum seekers, even when they were framed as victims. Zetter and Masquelier found that the victimization of refugees was sometimes to their benefit, if they were comfortable with shouldering the label, as it resulted in an increase in aid received. However, referring to Figure 2, it seems like the French public were being primed to be less sympathetic and more afraid of refugees and asylum seekers as time went on, as there were more articles of alleged crimes being printed as time went on, with a short break from February to June 2016. Furthermore, Figure 3 shows that number of hate crimes committed against refugees also slowly increased from the beginning of 2016 on to December 2017. This is in line with Georgiou and Zabarowski's study, "Media coverage of the "refugee crisis": A cross-European perspective," which found that the general response towards refugees and asylum seekers of European press in 2015 was sympathetic, a response that gradually turned into hostility and suspicion in mid-2016 to the end of 2017.

Conclusions

The findings of this research were fourfold. First in answer to the essential question posed by this paper, the results of the coded news articles indicate that the media is indeed an active in the biopolitical subjugation of refugees. Second, the French media framed refugees as dangerous and primed the French public for a cognitive association between “refugee” and “threat” at heightened periods of fear and suspicion in Europe. Third, the results presented in Figure 2 support Hannah Arendt’s argument that the stateless are rightless, as well as Ticktin’s description of biopolitics as “letting die or making live,” because refugees were nearly “let die” in hate crimes following periods of extreme media priming surrounding not only terrorist attacks, but petty crimes. Fourth and finally, the research results support the argument of two main frames through which refugees are viewed by the public, as either helpless victims or as dangerous threats to society. There are many directions in which further research could go from here, but two specific research ideas will be presented.

The third finding of this research, the support of Ticktin’s notion of “letting die or making live,” is especially interesting because most research on this topic of “letting die or making live” focuses on the “making live” portion, such as Dunn’s example of macaroni, the single source of food, and thus life, in the South Ossetian camps in 2014. In fact, it could be argued that this “letting die,” is a new form of media-induced triage.

To understand this, it is important to understand that traditional triage is an unfortunate reality of the humanitarian apparatus. Humanitarianism functions within a sacrificial world order in which there are winners and losers and therefore victims, with the goal of alleviating suffering, i.e. reducing the number of victims produced by such an order. However, in practice, humanitarian organizations must conduct their projects through selection due to limited funding.

It is at this point that certain populations get prioritized or triaged. Triage is focused on immediate action based on prioritization of needs. Contrary to this unfortunate necessity, the “letting die” of crime reporting evident in this research is purely sensational. While reporters have a duty to report incidents as they happen, it is important that they understand the consequences of the frames they use and the volume of articles they produce during periods when the public is already fearful and distrusting of refugees. By prioritizing sensational, graphic refugee crime stories, the French media had a role in the immediate action following the points of increased reporting, the increase in hate crimes, which is arguably a new form of triage.

These findings have implications on further research on media portrayal and the argument of where the responsibility for portrayal lies. The two points of view are best argued by Florian Arendt and Hadeshian. Arendt argues that audiences must be informed and conscious of media framing while Hadeshian disagrees, contending that the onus lies on the media, because it has a responsibility to providing truthful coverage that does not perpetuate stereotypes. This research supports Hadeshian, due to the spike in reported hate crimes after periods of heightened refugee crime reporting. This suggests that there is correlation between refugee crime reporting and hate crimes against refugees. However, further research should be done in the relationship between crime reporting and hate crimes.

While the results of these findings are interesting, to be validated, this research would need to be extended in multiple ways. Given more time, this study could be expanded to be both multinational and multimedia. It would be interesting to see if the data and results found in print media was applicable to television, radio, and, most notably, social media. Social media by nature is more sensational and alarmist than print media. Furthermore, it does not obey the media coverage cycle of professional journalism. For these reasons, social media’s portrayal of refugees

might be even more prejudice than the findings of print media. In addition to this, it would be important to expand this research into a cross national analysis. It would be most interesting to compare this Case Study to a similar one in Germany and Italy, as all three countries have similar, well established media landscapes, but have accepted varying numbers of refugees.

Endnotes

TRANSLATIONS OF KEY WORDS AND PHRASES

| French | English |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Réfugié | Refugee |
| Crime | Crime |
| Crime contre l'humanité | Crime against humanity |
| Crime de guerre | War crime |

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